

tural alterations, we must mention one great improvement outside. By an arrangement with the parish, the road in front of the grand entrance has been remodelled, and a tram-way for carriages formed beneath the portico, so that visitors are set down under cover most conveniently.

The royal entrance, in Hart-street, has been considerably improved; as have also the approaches to the Queen's box and the retiring-room.

We will now again enter the house and see what has been effected there. Our engraving will aid us in giving a clear idea of the brilliant appearance it presents. The face of the centre box on the ground tier, is 18 feet 9 in. further from the curtain than it originally was, thus elongating the horse-shoe form to that extent, and rendering the lines of the boxes very beautiful. Each tier above recedes still further, the top-most being 2 feet 3 inches behind the lowest. The stage has been brought forward 9 feet into the house; and the distance from the front of the centre box to the front of the stage, is 59 feet, including the orchestra, which is 12 feet 6 in. deep, and accommodates eighty-five musicians. The greatest width of the internal area, is 62 feet;\* in front of the orchestra it is 54 feet 8 inches. The greatest height of the house is about 54 feet.† The height of the Corinthian columns which form the proscenium, as shown in the engraving, is 25 feet 10 inches; the diameter 2 feet.

In the old house, it will be remembered, there were four tiers of boxes, including the slips; in the present we have six. The centre portion of the fourth and fifth tiers is appropriated as an amphitheatre for the general public, with seven rows of seats in each, extending backward over the corridor below. Above these, in the sixth tier, is the gallery.

The area of the house is wholly filled with stalls; half being reserved under that name, the other half forming the pit. The seats here are all circular in plan, as they are also in the amphitheatres.

Our engraving shews the boxes divided on every tier by caryatides; and this, when the house is completed, will be the case. At present the caryatides are up on the grand tier only, so that there is a want of apparent support for the ceiling. When these are fixed, the effect in this respect will be greatly improved. The spaces between the caryatides are each, for the most part, divided into two boxes, by moveable partitions and drapery, not shown in the engraving.

The figures, together with all the ornaments in relief on the boxes, proscenium, &c., are moulded of a material called *canalic*, for which the architect of the theatre, Mr. Albano, has a patent. As its name imports, it is composed of hemp: it is light, takes a sharp impression, and is moreover cheaper than *papier mâché*. It would seem to be very durable, too, and deserves to be better known than it is.

Let us now describe these ornaments somewhat in detail. The sixth tier has been mounted with a large festoon of fruit and flowers, sustained by raised ornaments at equal distances, the cushion (which, as well as all the hangings, is of red damask) being supported by rich gilt moulding; the lower frieze is likewise richly gilt. The fifth tier is covered with panels in the Renaissance style, each panel embracing an equal division of the front of the

house, with a drop of flowers and shell between them, and rich frieze moulding. The fourth tier is mounted with similar panels, but in the centre of each is a Satyr's head, the expression of which is bold and good. These panels are connected by a continuous stream of flowers, which renders them complete. The frieze moulding is repeated. The third tier is arranged with seventeen panels, the centres of which are oval medallions, all having different subjects, in bold relief, surrounded with oak wreaths and acorns richly mounted, the four seasons, and other subjects, being tastefully executed. The ground of these panels and medallions, and panel ornaments, is a turquoise blue; the figures are finished in flake white, and draperies and other parts in gold. The frieze here is a bold ornament, composed of a large scroll with figures of Pan, &c., and boys with musical instruments introduced. This, surmounted by an egg-and-tongue-moulding in white and gold, completes the tier, with the capping moulding. The second, or grand tier, is mounted with a rich acanthus leaf, with a massive moulding below finished in imitation ormolu. The frieze above the acanthus leaf is of a light character, the design being composed of small figures of Cupid,—some reclining in the centre in a nest, and others flying towards the centre,—the remaining part being filled up with roses and other flowers. The capping moulding is here again of a rich and varied design. It will be seen that, with the exception of the small panels, which are light blue, the whole of the house is white and gold, producing a charming effect.

Colour is reserved for the ceiling, the decorations of which are shown clearly in our engraving. It may be stated broadly as 80 feet in length, and 60 in width, and was painted by Sigisferri Ferri and Verardi; with the exception of some of the figures, which we believe were executed by M. Zorra. The decorations on the ceiling consist of a large scroll centre-ornament, perforated for the purpose of ventilation, and gilt, and mounted with bold fruit-and-flower-moulding, with egg-and-tongue, and other small members, so as to form five different margins, which are embraced on the outer edge by eight massive shields, and again are connected with lines of golden rope, running to the outer circle of the ceiling. There are four groups, connected by garlands. The group nearest to the proscenium represents Music and her many attributes, with Infant Genius. Lyrical Tragedy occupies the centre of the house. On the right is Comedy; on the left, Painting and Sculpture, with a metaphysical presentment of Art. The exterior architectural border is in high relief, and embraces four divisions—Astronomy, Mechanics, Trade, and Commerce, environed by figures and decorations in lower relief. Other groups represent the Seasons; and the names of celebrated composers are given in tablets. The painted ceiling terminates on a very bold egg-moulding, which is gilt, and forms also the cornice of the top tier of boxes.

In the proscenium ceiling, the same egg-moulding is repeated, and formed into margins with a frieze, consisting of birds and squirrels in high relief, gilt. This is introduced again in the upper and lower edge of ceiling; the centre part is formed into smaller panels by moulding, the centres of which are filled with ornamental paintings. In the centre are the royal arms. The columns, with their capitals, are also white and gold. The spandrel above contains on one side a figure representing Britannia, and on the other a figure of Italy, on gold backgrounds.

The front of the boxes, it may be observed, swells out at the foot, which, besides affording convenience to the occupants, materially aids the effect by reflecting the light. The form of the proscenium too, is exceedingly good, and displays very excellent taste.

The chandelier is of large size, and would of itself light the house sufficiently; there are, however, in addition, branches for wax candles, projecting from the front of the grand tier and second tier.

The number of persons who may be seated in the house may be stated as follows:—There are eight proscenium boxes, thirty in the pit tier, thirty-four in the grand tier, thirty-four in the third tier, twenty-eight in the fourth tier, twenty-eight in the fifth tier, and twenty-eight in the sixth tier, or 190 in all.

Allowing six persons to a box, these will seat commodiously.....	1,140
The stalls hold .....	256
The pit .....	263
The amphitheatres 148 each .....	296
The gallery.....	300

Making in the whole .... 2,255

Exclusive of standing room. Judging, however, from the number of persons in many of the boxes on Tuesday night, this may be considered under the mark.

The means of properly heating and ventilating the house appear to have received due attention. Hot-air stoves are fitted up under the pit stalls, with flues to conduct the warmed air over the house; and every gas-lamp in the corridors has a ventilating-pipe above it. On these, and some other points, however, we reserve our opinion, not venturing to form one hastily. For the extinguishing of fire, should it occur, mains, supplied from cisterns in the upper part of the house, are provided, with cocks and hose on each tier.

As regards the conveyance of sound, we are disposed to consider the new opera-house singularly successful. During the performance we visited every part of the house, and found in every place that the lowest sound from the stage was distinctly audible.\* The boxes are all lined with wood; the walls of the corridors, the Queen's entrance, and the grand staircase are rendered with Martin's patent cement.

As to the cost, concerning which some inquiries have been made of us, it is impossible to speak positively; the nature of the works precluded specific contracts, and the accounts have not yet been made up. 40,000*l.* will probably not cover it.

Mr. Albano richly deserves all the praise that can be offered to him. During the progress of the works he has never left the spot, and has himself, as we are informed, designed and arranged the whole, whether structural or decorative. He has earned for himself a good reputation both as a constructor and an artist.

The whole of the decorations, with the exception of the ceiling before mentioned, were ably executed under his direction, by Mr. Ponsonby, of the Regent's-circus. It is hardly necessary to say that all the Canalic ornaments were painted and gilt while the other works were being proceeded with, and were put up afterwards without any loss of time. The builder employed was Mr. Holland.†

\* For some remarks on this head, see p. 126, *cont.* For others on the same generally, p. 51, *ibid.*

† The official returns, in accordance with the provisions of the Building Act, have made several errors. Feb. 18th, when the walls were up, and "the timber, stone, roof, and partition fixed." Mr. Hosking and Mr. Poynter wrote, "That, so far as the works in the alterations and reconstruction of the interior of the theatre have been executed, they have been done in a sound, workmanlike, and satisfactory manner; and, in pursuance of the Act, we hereby certify our approval of the same." And subsequently they certified, "With regard to the works comprised in the said alterations and to the said building, that they have been built sufficiently strong, and that they are sufficiently set to be safe."

\* 2 feet wider than the Queen's Theatre in the Haymarket, and 6 feet wider than that of Drury Lane.  
† The height of the former house was..... 54 feet.  
The Queen's Theatre..... 60 "  
Drury Lane..... 60 "  
La Scala, at Milan..... 70 "  
San Carlos, at Naples..... 75 "